

## Questions and Answers

ESSER Fund Office Hours: June 1, 2020

### Equitable Services

#### **Can non-public schools request services and funds dating back to March 13, 2020? If so, what documentation would be required? Is there an amount limit?**

LEAs may pay for expenditures dating back to March 13, 2020 (date of the declaration of national disaster by the president); this includes funds allocated to non-public equitable services. LEAs should document the consultation process, which should include an assessment of the non-public school's needs around COVID-19 and related school closures dating back to March 13, 2020. All communication with non-public schools should be documented, including Intent to Participate and Affirmation of Meaningful Consultation forms, as well as emails, phone logs, certified mail receipts, meeting notes, etc. There is no amount limit when it comes to these retroactive expenses.

#### **On the Program Details page, under Spending Plan, the narrative prompt states, "Provide a description of the reasonable and necessary administrative activities...". Do we put N/A if we are not collecting admin costs from ESSER?**

Correct. The LEA is not required to deduct administration cost and may put in N/A in the narrative box.

#### **For equitable services, when determining proportionate share based on enrollment, should the exact percentage be used or rounded to the nearest whole percent? Example: Would 5.8% round up to 6%?**

The LEA should not round to the nearest whole number; the department created an excel worksheet

#### **If we have not heard from a private school or if the non-public school may choose to participate but is undecided, where do we put funds to hold in case funds need to be allocated? Is there a certain account?**

Document attempts to reach out to the non-public schools. The LEA may set a "reasonable" deadline, which takes into consideration the non-public school's schedule. The LEA should be clear and give sufficient notice of the deadline, and identify potential consequences for not meeting the deadline. If the LEA communicates this, it is ultimately up to the LEA to determine whether or not they want to provide equitable services. LEAs should document efforts at communication and utilize a variety of methods to contact all eligible public schools. If the LEA chooses to set-aside funds for equitable services, those would be placed in 72130-599 in the budget.

#### **For equitable services, who controls the funds?**

Control of funds and title to materials, equipment, and property must remain with the LEA. No funds may go directly to a non-public school. An LEA must administer those funds, materials, equipment, and property.

#### **Can I provide reimbursement for an employee of the non-public school?**

Current federal regulations and non-regulatory guidance clearly state that private school officials have no authority to obligate or receive federal funds because the LEA must maintain control of the funds. Service provided to non-public schools must be delivered by LEA employees or through contracts with a third party.

#### **Who retains the equipment or devices purchased for a participating non-public school?**

If devices or property are purchased (like electronic devices) at the end of the grant, they must be reclaimed by the LEA unless the private school is involved in ESSA programs.

Unless the private school feels that the need for devices outweighs the possibility of returning the devices at the end of the grant (2022), the department recommends prioritizing funds towards the purchase of consumable items and services that will not revert back the ownership of the LEA. Private schools will have a number of needs and obligations, and the required consultation should help prioritize those needs in a way that best leverages the use of funds to the advantage of the private school. This recommendation applies both to ownership and allowability.

## Questions and Answers

ESSER Fund Office Hours: June 2, 2020

### **General Announcement**

If LEAs are planning to purchase devices (i.e., Chromebooks, computers, and iPads), please budget with ESSER funds. If, at any time, additional funds from the commissioner are available, each LEA can revise its funding application to address other needs with ESSER Funds.

### **Allowable Expenses**

#### **Will private schools return items [such as] touchless thermometers when the grant is over?**

If devices or property are purchased (like electronic devices) at the end of the grant, they must be reclaimed by the LEA unless the private school is involved in ESSA programs.

Unless the private school feels that the need for devices outweighs the possibility of returning the devices within two years, the department recommends prioritizing funds towards the purchase of consumable items and services that will not revert the ownership of the LEA at the end of the grant.

#### **What about consumable cleaning supplies? Would I just have them document that those supplies were depleted? That is a request by a private school to receive cleaning supplies.**

Correct; the purchase of cleaning supplies will be allowable under CARES Funding. Have the private school document when they received the supplies and when the supplies were depleted.

#### **Do I provide effectiveness data on cleaning products, thermometers, and nurses--things a school needs?**

Correct, descriptions of the effectiveness data should include how these devices ensure a safe and healthy learning environment.

#### **Can we purchase Chromebooks that are meant to replace outdated Chromebooks in our fleet?**

Yes, as described, this is an allowable expense. Please budget these in 71100-599 in the ESSER Funding Applications.

#### **Will the use of the funds for LEAs be flexible, with LEAs being permitted to spend the funds on all the same activities authorized under all the major programs in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act?**

Yes, the uses of funds for this money are flexible. While the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund allocates funds to LEAs based on their Title I allocations, these are not Title I funds. Under the law, funds may be used for any activity authorized by ESEA, IDEA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Perkins Act (CTE), or the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, in addition to activities to help with the response to COVID-19 (including preparedness and response efforts, sanitation, professional development, distance learning, and others).

### **Examples of funding flexibility could include the following:**

#### **School Meals:**

- Offset costs due to serving school meals (not covered through USDA reimbursements).
- Cover additional personnel (i.e. hazard pay, hours, etc.) or logistical costs (i.e. transportation, etc.).

#### **Distance/Remote Learning:**

- Cover costs of devices, connectivity (hot spots, wireless, internet service, etc.), printing/preparing learning packets, instructional resources/tools, and other technology costs (hardware, software, assistive technology, outfitting buildings/buses with Wi-Fi, online learning platforms, subscriptions, etc.).

#### Facilities/Equipment:

- Cover costs of sanitizing/disinfecting buildings, additional personnel costs ('hazard pay', hours, etc.), and equipment (gloves, masks, PPE, cleaning supplies, etc.).

#### Mental and Physical Health:

- Cover the costs of counseling, telehealth, school nursing, therapeutic services, and wraparound services and supports (contracted hours, professional learning, programs, etc.).

#### Supplemental Learning:

- Cover costs of extended learning, remediation, and/or enrichment opportunities for students (summer learning, afterschool programs, additional pay for teachers and staff, extended schedules, etc.).

#### Professional Development:

- Cover costs of additional professional development for school leaders, teachers, and staff (i.e. trainings, extended professional development days, consultants, programs, etc.).

#### At-Risk Student Populations:

- Cover costs of specific activities, services, supports, programs, and/or targeted interventions directly addressing the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, English Learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.

#### Continuity of Core Staff and Services:

- Restore any potential LEA FY21 budget reductions due to decreased state and/or local revenue.
- Cover costs of offsetting the need to furlough or reduce the salaries of any state or locally funded staff

#### **Equitable Services**

**Please explain the following statement in more detail (how will we determine the effectiveness) \* Describe how the items/use of funds selected above align with the identified needs and how the effectiveness of each activity will be assessed.**

During the ongoing consultation meetings throughout the school year, LEAs should ask the private school representatives questions

**I met with the private school rep today, and she wanted to know if she had to plan to use all of the proportional shares of the funds, or could they just use a part of the money.**

ESSA Sections 1118(a)(4)(B) and 8401(a)(1)(B) require funds allocated to a local educational agency (LEA) for educational services and other benefits to eligible private school children, teachers and other educational personnel, and families to be obligated in the fiscal year for which the funds are received by the LEA. Through the required consultation process, LEAs should work with non-public school partners to develop a spending plan that is based on the non-public school's needs as well as the requirement under the law to obligate funds in the fiscal year they were received. Private schools will have a number of needs and obligations, and the required consultation process should help prioritize those needs in a way that best leverages the use of funds to the advantage of the private school.

**The private school only wants to purchase consumables like paper, cleaning supplies.**

The purchase of cleaning supplies and paper are allowable expenses under the CARES Funding. The department recommends having the private school document when they received the supplies and when the supplies were deleted.

**I've had a private school ask why the property/equipment purchased with ESSER funds are required to be retrieved at the conclusion of the grant award, if the private school students would still need the items after June 30, 2022. I've referenced that ESSER funds are one-time relief funds and that items purchased with grant awards are necessary for the performance of the Federal Award. Is there anything further that could help address this question?**

If devices or property are purchased (like electronic devices) at the end of the grant, they must be reclaimed by the LEA unless the private school is involved in ESSA programs.

Unless the private school feels that the need for devices outweighs the possibility of returning the devices within two years, the department recommends prioritizing funds towards the purchase of consumable items and services that will not revert back the ownership of the LEA at the end of the grant.

Private schools will have a number of needs and obligations, and consultation should help prioritize those needs in a way that best leverages the use of funds to the advantage of the private school. This recommendation applies both to ownership and allowability.

**So a private school that participates in ESSER funds, but doesn't participate in any other equitable services at the conclusion of the ESSER grant award, but then decides they want to participate in equitable services (say Title IV) for the next school year, is it reasonable for the private school to continue to use the equipment/property?**

Correct, a private school could choose to participate in equitable services on an annual basis by completing the Intent to Participate form and the consultation process conducted by the LEA annually.

### **Grant Administration**

**Who at the LEA is responsible for managing the CARES Act funds? Title I Directors or someone else?**

Responsibility for CARES Act Administration will be determined locally. For time and effort purposes, LEAs should be reminded that this does constitute a different cost objective than grant funds authorized under ESSA, IDEA, and McKinney-Vento.

**Are the CARES Act funds for the entire LEA or just federal programs?**

CARES Act funds can be used for all schools and programs in an LEA, not just for use by traditional federal programs

**If an LEA has some Title I schools and some non-Title I schools, how is the LEA required to allocate CARES Act funds to schools?**

The CARES Act does not require the funds to be allocated down to the school level. It would be an LEA-level decision based upon the needs of the LEA. The CARES Act funds are not Title I, Part A funds.

## Questions and Answers

ESSER Fund Office Hours: June 3, 2020

### **Can our food service department be reimbursed for the loss of revenue they experienced with COVID - 19?**

The ESSER Funds may be used to:

- Offset costs due to serving school meals (not covered through USDA reimbursements).
- Restore any potential LEA FY21 budget reductions due to decreased state and/or local revenue.
- Cover costs of offsetting the need to furlough or reduce the salaries of any state or locally funded staff

### **In the budget, we must select "location code". What is the difference between Coffee County (160) and district funding (160S001)?**

It appears that the location codes 160 and 160-S001 may be used interchangeably. Both refer to expenditures that are districtwide, and not budgeted for a specific school. The department recommends that LEAs use the location code without the S001 to be consistent and to avoid any possible confusion. Let me know if you have any other questions.

### **Can these funds be used for contracts with medical personnel to check temperatures as students and staff members arrive at school?**

As described, this is an allowable use of funds.

### **Please share the sub-fund and revenue code for ESSER Funds.**

- Any subgrant in the range of 931-939 as a Federal Projects Fund.
- The revenue code is 47301 for ESSER Funds.